

Draft Minutes
Beaches and Shores Advisory Committee
Tuesday, May 5, 2016, 9:00 a.m.
Building Construction Services Large Conference Room
18400 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948

****Please note that one or more Charlotte County Commissioners may be in attendance at any meeting of the Beaches and Shores Advisory Committee****

Members Present

Clifford Kewley, Member-at-Large, Chairman
Katherine Ariens, District 2
Dick Whitney, District 1
Rich Parchen, District 4

Members Excused

[vacant], District 5
Tommy Brock, District 3 / Vice Chairman
Robert Pierce, FL Shore & Beach Preservation Assoc.

Staff Present

Lynette Auger, Natural Resources
Gayle Moore, Recording Secretary

Guests Present

Michael Poff, Coastal Engineering Consultants
Chad Lach, State Parks
Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch
(Ms. Joann Dillon, Ms. Diane Whidden in attendance in his absence)

Call to Order

Chairman Kewley called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Following the roll call, and on motion made by Mr. Whitney, seconded by Ms. Ariens, and carried unanimously, the minutes from April 7, 2016, were approved as received.

Additions/Deletions to Agenda Items

Chair Kewley asked whether there were any additions to the agenda; none were offered.

Chairman Kewley commented generally on the meeting agenda, and welcomed Mr. Damian Oshab, who chaired and was instrumental in organizing a similar meeting on Manasota Key for the North Manasota Beach residents there to consider issues of beach erosion. Chairman Kewley described it as a high-quality meeting which both motivated and informed residents.

Citizens Comments on Agenda Items

Mr. Andy Wing indicated he had reached out to Sarasota County's Coastal Engineer, Laird Wreford, regarding finding additional funding sources (Sarasota County does things mostly through MSBU funding). Mr. Wing also indicated he met with Ed Hill of the Englewood Chamber recently as well, seeking avenues for better coordination of information amongst the various advisory committees. Ms. Ariens commented on the value of the annual joint

meeting each February; Mr. Wing disagreed with the value of the most recent meeting, and further discussion ensued regarding how the format of that meeting has changed, and the possibility of getting an item on the agenda for future meetings. Ms. Ariens suggested that Mr. Wing or any other citizen could suggest items of interest and members of BSAC could ensure that such discussion items appeared on future agendas. Mr. Wing agreed this could be productive. The various options for bringing citizen issues forward were then discussed. Mr. Wing also mentioned his recent application to become a member of the Marine Advisory Committee.

Mr. Damian Oshab, Boulder Point Condo Assoc. Board member, commented to the group. He advised that his group is looking for more citizen input regarding the Key. It has been noticed that representation doesn't include condo associations or other residents on the north end of the Key, which is where there are major issues, e.g., the erosion. Mr. Oshab indicated his comments were about people recognizing the dire circumstances they are in, and moving forward, looking for possible actions (e.g., getting permits for both seawalls and rock revetments.) These folks want more information regarding options to save the beaches, and to save their homes. He noted that installation of revetments affects properties on either side of the installation, and also that life on a barrier island needs to take the natural constant movement of sand into account; but as he pointed out there is a great economic effect from the erosion, e.g., in loss of rental income where the beach has disappeared.

New Business

None offered.

Old Business

Update on the Stump Pass 10-Year Inlet Management Plan

Chair Kewley commented on the great beach that will result from the work, then turned the floor over to Michael Poff of Coastal Engineering Consultants to speak on the Stump Pass work.

Mr. Poff indicated he had excellent news for everyone, first that the state park has provided the required easement, which was the last part of the puzzle for all components to be built. The bid documents have been submitted to the Project Engineering group, and they will work with Purchasing to get that advertised and on the street as soon as possible. Mr. Poff said he believed a contract could be executed in July and work could begin in the Pass in September/October, and work on Manasota Key could begin in November, after shorebird season and turtle nesting season.

The excellent news Mr. Poff brought concerns the State funding program; he restated that in the past year the County had applied for \$3.6 million in state cost sharing, and the legislature approved \$2.5 million (via approving a greater number of projects to a level of 80% rather than fewer at 100%.) This year, the balance of the original request has been approved, so that money will be available this summer. Finally, in "awesome news", Mr. Poff said we have received an email from the state Department of Emergency Management that the County's appeal was approved for the storm recovery dollars for the 2012 storm. This could mean funds of up to a couple of million dollars. Practically, this means state will pay less, local will pay less, and the Feds will pay more of the total. In turn, some of the state money may be able to stay in local coffers to help with future work. But, in any case, the local share and burden on taxpayers will be reduced. This money will go to the master "improved" project, rather than simply replacing patches of missing sand, and this will be a more effective use of the funds.

Chair Kewley asked about staff at the firm that kept track of where funding was available to seek for these projects; Mr. Poff responded that the three or four basic sources were well known to staff, but he also said that RESTORE funds from the BP oil spill were a completely new process, the firm had no specialists but relied on RESTORE specialists to advise on that. He noted that Charlotte County has stepped up with a very effective effort to work with RESTORE for beach restoration activities.

Chad Lach asked how long it would take to do Manasota Key portion of the project; Mr. Poff responded that in the best conditions, he would expect three months; if the area had storms, add a month. The goal is to have it done by before shorebird season 2017.

Chair Kewley asked what would be the best month for a BSAC Committee field trip. Mr. Poff suggested doing one in October, to Palm Island/Knight Island, and then in January do Manasota Key. He proposed touching base in the summer, to plan for October, since that's also the first meeting of the season.

Manasota Key Beach Erosion and Renourishment

Chair Kewley mentioned that there was now an open Request for Proposals (RFP) from engineering firms and Mr. Poff responded that his firm had submitted theirs yesterday. Some further discussion ensued on this process.

Chair Kewley also mentioned that there had been a nice discussion at Mr. Ochab's meeting regarding North Manasota Beach conditions, about not only replacing sand, but possible methods to retain sand; the Chair indicated he felt that more such opportunities to educate the residents is great, because then they can listen to consultants and understand, and ask useful questions. Mr. Ochab responded, saying he wants to go on the record to state that citizens want to be involved in the discussion. He also mentioned that there are remnants of T-groins in the waters off the Sarasota coastline that are no longer effective; he felt the key is not just placing sand but retaining it. Breakwater reefs is one other option he mentioned, noting that Mr. Poff had described this option to his group. Further discussion ensued on the topic, and Chair Kewley suggested that until all citizens are up to speed on the technical discussion that it would be useful to keep this question before the Commissioners.

The Chair noted that until there is a consultant chosen for this project, and Matt Logan not being here today, there might not be much new information to be given. Mr. Poff recapped the work already done and the studies that are currently posted on the website, all of which were delivered and discussed earlier in the season. He gave some additional comments on the projected costs, including the hard-bottom mitigation which would be a fixed cost that will go with the project regardless of which funding alternative is appropriate.

Mr. Poff also referred to Mr. Wing's meeting with Laird Wreford of Sarasota Co., who he said was an excellent source of information, noting that he had helped to set up the joint meeting between Charlotte and Sarasota Counties where a presentation on the key aspects of the study were presented. Mr. Poff said the presentation did emphasize to the Sarasota County participants that this area of erosion is one that they need to pay attention to, but he acknowledged that the conditions on Manasota Key in Sarasota are in decent shape compared to Charlotte, so there is no momentum for them to get involved at the present time. The hope is to convince them that now is the time to get involved, not when conditions become dire, and Mr. Poff indicated they would continue working on that relationship.

Mr. Ochab responded on this information, noting that after the initial group activities, he feels that the conversation is turning toward acceptance of the need for action. He added

that the Manasota Beach Association in Sarasota County had emailed him to say “we’re in” so he feels they are becoming aware of the concerns now; whereas previously people would reference what happened when beach renourishment was first proposed ten years ago, there is more support now.

Citizen Comments

Chair Kewley opened the floor to citizen comments.

Mr. Andy Wing commented on a number of aspects, including offering thanks to the Commissioners for making RESTORE funds available for the study; he also commented that the beach renourishment MSTU, when finalized, will have the ability to create new public parking on North Beach Rd., which is important in the state funding formula where more public parking draws more state money into the project.

Chair Kewley asked Parks and Recreation representative Lynette Auger for an update on the beach conditions; Ms. Auger provided details regarding bird populations and activities as well as various comments concerning trappers and their activities regarding wild hogs in the parks as well as coyotes and armadillos on Bokeelia. Mr. Chad Lach of State Parks also joined the discussion regarding iguanas on Boca Grande, particularly with regard to citizen wildlife control efforts versus the Lee County Iguana trapping efforts. Extensive discussion ensued on the various trapping efforts and outcomes, as well as the reproductive habits of these exotics.

Election of Officers

Chair Kewley discussed the difficulty of holding the election with people absent; he suggested postponing this activity to the fall, when attendance is improved. Mr. Parchen moved to accept this suggestion; second by Ms. Ariens and unanimously approved.

Chair Kewley noted that the next regular meeting is scheduled for October and suggested that the group set agenda details closer to that time. He said, with regard to a proposed BSAC field trip in October, that it can’t be a regular meeting because arrangements would be required for the group to take as many citizens as would like to attend, and various other legalities would also intrude on the process. Mr. Wing suggested the Committee have Joan Dunham-Card involved in promoting such a meeting, as she could send out a blast email residents; Chair Kewley acknowledged but noted the result would be the group having perhaps 650 residents tracking around the sites where construction has taken place, which would be unmanageable. He indicated the group could always make arrangements to meet at the Tringali Center in future for anything requiring a larger-than-usual attendance by the public.

Chair Kewley then welcomed Commissioner Deutsch who had arrived at 9:50 a.m. The Commissioner offered comments regarding how the Commission works to keep the public aware and involved.

[To hear the discussion in its entirety, please visit the Charlotte County Government website at <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/boards-committees/bsac/Pages/Meeting-Minutes.aspx> and choose the audio file for May 5, 2016.]

Staff Comments

None offered.

Member Comments

None offered.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle Moore
Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved by

Clifford Kewley, Chairman
Beaches & Shores Advisory Committee